

## Daniel's Vision Of Chapter 8, part 3

Valley Center Seventh-day Adventist Church

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The message the Bible reveals to us is that God is in control and will certainly succeed in His plan. That may or may not be evident to you today as you scan the horizon of worldly affairs. It may seem, from a human viewpoint, that utter chaos reigns. But if we could see things as God sees them, we would know He is in charge. His Book, His prophecies reveal this picture. And it is good news! Through all the give-and-play of human endeavors, there is One Who sees and knows all; One Who will one day make Himself known to the world visibly, Whose brightness and glory will bring this long night of sin to a close. That is what the book of Daniel has been teaching us.

The Israelites made their journey through the wilderness for those long years. There is a word that the Bible uses to describe their march, spoken by Moses in his last speech. "For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your *trudging* through this great wilderness." Deuteronomy 2:7.

The word "trudging" accurately pictures the plodding of Israel during those decades. It can also depict our experience in the "wilderness" of life. Was there some "trudging" in your life this last week? Even though Moses went on to say, "These forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing," the question "How long till we get there?" must have been on their minds constantly and on their lips occasionally.

You remember riding in the car with your parents and asking them, "Are we there yet?" or, hearing the same question from your own children. The journey seems to take forever; patience is tested. "How long?" is the question pressed from the aching hearts of those trudging in the wilderness.

From the first leaf that fell after the fall of Adam I'm sure he wondered, "How long?" From the moment Eve cradled the lifeless form of Abel I'm sure she wondered, "How long?" Throughout human history that has been the question. How long till we can be admitted to the Garden once more? How long till all is restored? How long till sin, death and sorrow are banished? I'm sure you have your

own “How long?” questions that beg to be answered. They are legitimate questions, and ones that God does not despise. Remember, He knows *your* trudging.

But there are some other “How long” questions which should not be ignored. How long till the name and reputation of God is not soiled? How long till the pain in His heart can be removed? How long till the unveiled fellowship between God and His creatures can be reinstated?

That question of “How long?” is asked in the vision of Daniel 8. We would do well to study carefully its setting and how it is answered. After seeing the devastating work of the horn power against God’s truth and sanctuary, Daniel said, “Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, ‘How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation for giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?’ And he said to me, ‘For two thousand three hundred days, then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.’” Daniel 8:13, 14.

It is vital to see the statement of verse 14 as being the answer to the question posed in verse 13. The question in verse 13 is basically “How long will the trampling continue? How long will evil triumph?” We’ve seen in the visions recorded by Daniel that earthly enterprises come to their end when Jesus returns. Christ is the Stone that smites the statue of chapter 2 and grinds it to powder. In chapter 7 the horn successfully wields its destructive power until it is given to the “burning flame,” a reference Paul applies to the return of Christ.

So the question of “How long the trampling?” is really “How long till Jesus comes back?” because that is when earthly kingdoms will be swallowed up; that is when evil will be put down. But here we encounter a problem, because we are told that it is not God’s policy to identify the “day and hour” of His coming. Our God is too loving and too kind to provide that information, because human nature would tend to procrastinate in the matter of surrendering our wills to Him. We would most likely put off the necessary steps of receiving salvation. So He has generously given “signs” which tell us His coming is near, without revealing the “day and hour.” How will God answer the question?

At first glance the answer seems oblique and not to the point. It doesn’t seem to really address the question. “How long the trampling? In 2300 days that sanctuary will be cleansed.” Our initial take might be “How does this answer the question?”

When we look closer, though, we can see how this is a perfect answer to the question.

After His resurrection, when Jesus was about to be received into glory, His disciples asked Him something. Their question and His response are worthy to consider in this context. “Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’” Acts 1:6-8.

What we find in this interchange is a time-related question posed by the disciples. The answer the Lord gave is not a direct answer to their question, but it *reveals important information as to a necessary pre-requisite*, in this case the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. Applying that analysis to the question and answer given in Daniel 8 will lead us in the right direction.

The question “How long the trampling?” has been asked, which we interpreted to be the same as “How long till the return of Christ?” The answer given is not a direct answer, “For 2300 days, then the sanctuary shall be cleansed,” and we wonder in what way the answer relates to the question.

There are three important components in the answer that need to be addressed. First there is the time period 2300 days; then we need to understand what sanctuary is being referred to; and then we need to understand what it means for the sanctuary to be “cleansed.”

The Hebrew literally says “evening-mornings” and not days, and because of that some have thought that if there are 2300 “evening-mornings,” then it should be understood as 1150 days. But this is not a fair reading of the text. In Genesis 1, we’re told that the “evening and the morning” were the first day, the second day and so on. “Evening-morning” was merely a verbal equivalent of “day.”

But how shall we interpret this period, as literal or symbolic time? We’ve seen already that in Daniel, when in the context of symbolic prophecy a day has represented a year of literal time. The “three and a half times,” or years of chapter 7 equates to 1260 years, which agrees perfectly with what we find in Revelation 11, 12 and 13. We will find in chapter 9 of Daniel that a period of 70 weeks is brought to light and some translators, being confident that the time period is used

symbolically, have inserted the words, “weeks *of years*” in an effort to make that clear.

Because the scope of the vision of chapter 8 brings us down to “the end,” as clearly enunciated by the angel, and because there is precedent in Daniel for applying the “day for a year” principle in symbolic prophecy, we find that the 2300 “days” should be properly understood as years. This then is the longest time prophecy in Scripture. But notice that in this chapter there is no beginning point established.

What is the “sanctuary,” and how is it “cleansed?” As the Israelites encamped at the foot of Mt. Sinai, Moses received instructions as to the construction of a tabernacle which would serve as a meeting place for God and His people. “Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” Exodus 25:8. For about 500 years a portable tent was this designated meeting place. Then Solomon was privileged to build a permanent structure, perhaps the world’s most beautiful building, as a temple. It was later destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, reconstructed by Zerubbabel and remodeled by Herod. But that temple was razed by the Roman general Titus in A.D. 70, and since that time there has not been a “sanctuary.”

The scope of the time period being 2300 years clearly brings us into the New Testament era, where we find that no earthly sanctuary has existed for about 2000 years. Are we left with nothing to point to as being the “sanctuary” of Daniel 8?

Going back to the original instruction given to Moses, we find that he was told, “According to all that I show you, that is, the *pattern* of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.” Exodus 25:9. The writer of Hebrews comments, “Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the *true tabernacle which the Lord erected* and not man.” Hebrews 8:1, 2.

So, because there was no longer a sanctuary on earth, the prophecy must be speaking to the *sanctuary which is in heaven*, which is the true and original, of which earthly sanctuaries were only copies.

What does it mean when it says it has to be “cleansed.” Newer Bible translations vary in the way this verb is translated. You will find, for example, “reconsecrated,” “put right,” “restored to its proper place” and “justified,” to mention a few. It brings up the question “Is the word ‘cleansed’ a bad translation?”

Let's take a brief look at how the word is used in Scripture. We'll look specifically at two things. The Hebrew word is *tsadaq* and is found 41 times in the Old Testament. It is given the meaning of "be just," "be justified," "be righteous," "be vindicated." Sometimes a better way to catch the flavor of a word is to see how it is used in various contexts.

Five times we see the word *tsadaq* used in close association with words like "clean" and "pure." One example is Job 4:17 "Can a mortal be more *righteous* (*tsadaq*) than God? Can a man be more pure than His Maker?" In this passage of poetry, we find that the author has skillfully used words to construct a rhyme of concept between the two stanzas. This is called "synonymous parallelism." "A mortal" in the first line is echoed by "a man" in the second. "Be more righteous" in the first is repeated by "be more pure" in the second. "God" in the first line is equivalent to "Maker" in the second. "Pure" is made equivalent to "righteous" (*tsadaq*).

In Psalm 19:9 we read, "The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and *righteous* (*tsadaq*) altogether." In this passage, "clean" (*tahor*) is placed in parallel with "righteous" (*tsadaq*). So we see that the idea of "clean," or "pure" is not unrelated or foreign to the word we're looking at. When the translators of the KJV and NKJV used the word "cleansed," they were not inaccurate.

Secondly, in many occurrences, there is a distinct legal flavor associated with the word. Job 13:18 reads, "See now, I have prepared my case. I know I shall be *vindicated* (*tsadaq*)." Deuteronomy 25:1 says, "If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that the judges may judge them, and they *justify* (*tsadaq*) the righteous and condemn the wicked."

When the sons of Israel discovered Joseph's drinking cup in the sack of Benjamin, Judah lamented, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we *clear ourselves* (*tsadaq*)?" Genesis 44:16.

When Absalom attempted to wrest the kingdom from his father it says, "Now Absalom would rise early and stand beside the way to the gate (the "gate" in Old Testament times was where court business took place). So it was, whenever anyone who had a lawsuit came to the king for a decision, that Absalom would call to him and say, 'What city are you from?' And he would say, 'Your servant is from such and such a tribe of Israel.' then Absalom would say to him, 'Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you.' Moreover

Absalom would say, ‘Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him *justice (tsadaq)*.’” II Samuel 15:2-4.

From these examples, it is clear that the word in question is often seen in a judicial context. It anticipates a court setting, in which evidence is adduced and examined and a decision rendered. It looks forward to the “clearing” of charges imposed, the “vindication” of a person’s record. Merely seeing the word *tsadaq* in Daniel 8:14 would bring to mind the concepts of judicial review and administration. A reader of Daniel, familiar with the word and how it was used in other Scriptures would naturally associate judicial process with the term.

For us, we’ve become quite familiar with the teaching of God’s judgment from our study of Daniel. We saw in chapter 5 that a bloodless hand wrote on a palace wall that Babylon had been “weighed and found wanting,” clearly an allusion to God’s judicial system at work. We saw in chapter 7 that 5 times a significant transition occurred. The horn power was going about its lethal activity, but then “the judgment.”

Given the parallel of the prophecies of Daniel, we would expect that something having to do with “judgment” would occupy this “slot” in the sequence. In chapter 7, we had earthly kingdoms, the horn, the judgment and the end. In chapter 8, we’ve see earthly kingdoms the horn, and now we would expect something in keeping with “judgment” to complete the picture.

Was there something in the sanctuary service that was distinctly related to “judgment” and “cleansing”? Yes there was! To this very day orthodox Jews look upon Yom Kippur, called the Day of Atonement, as the “Day of Judgment.”

If you have an interest, you can research how Jews today look at Yom Kippur. You will find quotes like this one: “By Yom Kippur the 40 days of repentance, that begin with the first of Elul, have passed. On Rosh Hashanah God judged most of mankind and has recorded his judgment in the Book of Life. But he has given a 10 day reprieve. On Yom Kippur the Book of Life is closed and sealed. Those that have repented for their sins are granted a good and happy New Year.” <http://holidays.net/highholydays/yom.htm>

“The name ‘Yom Kippur’ means ‘Day of Atonement,’ and that pretty much explains what the holiday is. It is a day set aside to ‘afflict the soul,’ to atone for the sins of the past year. In Days Of Awe, I mentioned the ‘books’ in which God inscribes all of our names. On Yom Kippur, the judgment entered in these books is

sealed. This day is, essentially, your last appeal, your last chance to change the judgment, to demonstrate your repentance and make amends.” <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Judaism/holiday4.html>.

So the Jews look upon the service of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, as functioning as God’s final judgment! Most interesting, especially when we take into consideration that it was on that day that the sanctuary was “cleansed.” As part of the service, the high priest “shall sprinkle some of the blood on it (the altar) with his finger seven times, cleanse it, and sanctify it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.” Leviticus 16:19. The purpose of this “cleansing” was to remove the record of sins that had been deposited there throughout the year.

This once-a-year ceremony illustrated God’s final accounting with sin which takes place before Jesus’ return. So when the question is asked “How long the trampling?” what is the answer? We know that it cannot be a direct answer, because it is not God’s policy to reveal the “day and hour.” But, as Jesus did before He ascended to glory, an answer is given that while not “direct,” nevertheless reveals an important fact concerning a necessary pre-requisite to His return.

Let’s say that your child is restless as you travel to visit a friend whose whereabouts are unfamiliar to you. You’ve scribbled some notes on a scrap of paper and you are doing your best to make all the correct turns. Your child asks, “When will we get there?” You tell your child, “I can’t say exactly, but when we get to the Arco station on Edmonds street, they live in the next block.” No, you don’t know the exact time, but being able to identify something that is a last marker is helpful. That’s the message of Daniel 8:13, 14. “How long the trampling” (which comes to its end when Jesus comes back)? “At the conclusion of the 2300 year time period the judgment, the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary will commence.”

That aspect of the judgment, brought to view in chapter 7 when the Ancient of Days presides and the books are opened, illustrated by one of the festivals of the Jewish sanctuary service, Yom Kippur, will commence at the conclusion of the 2300 year prophecy. Remember, the vision of chapter 8 is placed in a “sanctuary setting,” with its animals being animals of sacrifice. While not a “direct answer,” it is the perfect answer. The beginning of heaven’s final tribunal, the conclusion of which is necessary before He comes back, is a date that will cheer the hearts of all those who cherish the fulfillment of God’s great plan.

There is remarkable harmony between the stories and instruction that teach us about God's ways. Noah and his family were "sealed" in the ark *before* the judgment of the world-destroying flood came. God's hand wrote on Belshazzar's palace wall, "You have been weighed and found wanting" *before* the destroyer came. Jesus said the time will come *before* His return that the "holy will remain holy, and the unholy will remain unholy." Before He returns, that aspect of the judgment must be concluded.

It's not just about books being examined or furniture cleansed. Those are merely verbal illustrations trying to open our eyes to the real issues at stake. Remember that no trial has a basis for existing unless charges are filed. In his rebellion, Satan accused God of being unfit to rule the universe. He brought charges against God's government, His throne and His law. He said that God's law was too restrictive, and that society would be better off with no restraints.

God's name and character are on trial. What part do we have to play in this? It is God's purpose to illustrate His justice and power in the transformation of the lives of those who yield to Him. He wants to build His case upon the evidence of changed characters. He wants to answer the charges of Satan by the exhibits of the lives of those who say "Yes" to Him. His proposition is, "I will make a mortal man (or woman) more rare ("precious" KJV) than fine gold." Isaiah 13:12. Notice that it's His promise, "I will make." This is not something we do. In times past, through "alchemy," men tried to find a way to make gold out of other substances. They never found out how to do it in the physical realm, but God says He can in the spiritual realm! He can make our characters as gold. He has the creative power to make weak sinful human beings (notice it's talking about "*mortal*" man) victorious through the merits of Christ. This is not legalism, it's grace at work. It's the Gospel, the power of God to salvation. But that process of refinement and purification can only take place if we say "Yes."

I have news for you. The world does not need to become more wicked before Jesus can come. We've seen enough selfishness, enough pride, enough murders, enough greed, enough violence, enough infidelity. If the world continues, it will surely become more and more wicked, because that is the nature of sin. The longer time goes on, the more ways will be invented to please the flesh and rebel against God. But there's no requirement that it be so.

In prophetic vision John saw angels holding back the winds of apocalyptic doom and they are told to continue restraining them, until the world becomes more corrupt? No, that's not what they are told. The winds are held back until God's

people are “sealed,” which is another way to say that they’ve allowed the Holy Spirit to have complete control of their lives. Paul said “the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing, of what? More and greater iniquity? No, the creation eagerly waits for revealing of the sons (and daughters) of God.” Romans 8:19. We don’t need to see the world becoming more wicked; we need to see the church becoming more righteous! No wedding I’ve ever heard of takes place before the bride becomes ready.

The point of Yom Kippur was not merely that the physical sanctuary be cleansed. “For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.” Leviticus 16:30. What is God more interested in? Clean furniture or clean hearts? Do you long to be “clean” today? Do you want that newness of life, that purity of soul? Do you want His purpose to be fulfilled in your life so that He can refute the devil’s challenges by pointing to you and saying, “Behold, this is My son, My daughter, in whom I am well pleased”? That can only happen if you give your heart to Jesus, repent of your sins and give your life completely to Him. He will do a work in your life that will surprise angels in heaven and the devil down here, and even you!